

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

1. (currently amended) A bimetallic catalyst for the treatment of waters containing nitrates, comprising a support and at least one noble metal and at least one non-noble metal, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the support, in elemental and anhydrous form, has a composition corresponding to the formula  $XYMgAl$ , wherein X is at least one noble metal; Y is at least one non-noble metal; Mg is magnesium; Al is aluminium.
2. (currently amended) A catalyst in accordance with claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein Mg and Al form a hydrotalcite structure.
3. (currently amended) A catalyst in accordance with claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the noble metal is selected from among Pd, Pt, Ru, Ir and Rh.
4. (currently amended) A catalyst in accordance with claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the noble metal is present in the form of noble metal oxide, in a proportion referring to the total weight of the catalyst of 0.1 to 30% by weight, preferably from 0.5 to 15% by weight.
5. (currently amended) A catalyst in accordance with claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the noble metal is Pd.
6. (currently amended) A catalyst in accordance with claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the non-noble metal is selected from among Cu, Sn, Zn, In, Ni, Ag, Fe or Co.
7. (currently amended) A catalyst in accordance with claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the non-noble metal is present in the form of non-noble metal oxide, in a proportion referring to the total weight of the catalyst of 0.5 to 10% by weight.
8. (currently amended) A catalyst in accordance with claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the non-noble metal is Cu.

9. (currently amended) A catalyst in accordance with claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the metals are incorporated into the hydrotalcite structure by impregnation.

10. (currently amended) A catalyst in accordance with claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the metals have been incorporated into the hydrotalcite structure during the synthesis stage of the hydrotalcite.

11. (currently amended) A catalyst in accordance with claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein at least one non-noble metal is incorporated into the hydrotalcite structure during the synthesis stage of the hydrotalcite and in that at least one noble metal is incorporated by impregnation in a stage subsequent to the synthesis stage.

12. (currently amended) A catalyst in accordance with claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the Mg and Al are present in the form of aluminium and magnesium oxides starting from a precursor of hydrotalcite by calcination in air at temperatures between 350 and 800° C, for a period of between 1 and 20 hours.

13. (currently amended) A catalyst in accordance with claim 12, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein at least one noble metal and at least one non-noble metal is incorporated into the structure of the hydrotalcite precursor during the synthesis stage of the hydrotalcite.

14. (currently amended) A catalyst in accordance with claim 13, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein at least one non-noble metal or metals are incorporated into the structure of the precursor during the synthesis stage of the hydrotalcite in order to form oxides of Mg/Al/non-noble metal, and in that at least one noble metal has been incorporated by impregnation in a stage subsequent to the synthesis stage.

15. (currently amended) A process for treating waters to eliminate nitrates present in liquid phase therein, said process comprising (a) treating said liquid phase with a catalyst in accordance with

claim 1, and (b) reducing nitrates to nitrogen by adding a reducing agent.

16. (currently amended) A process in accordance with claim 15, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the reducing agent is selected ~~among~~ from the group consisting of hydrogen, formic acid, hydrocarbons and combinations thereof.